

TEN STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL PROMOTIONS

Entertainment

PURPOSE: Staging exciting events that put members in your club and keep them talking about the club has become an important part of the day-today operation in our business. Included is a simple 10-step process outlined by Ray Ford, which should lead to successful development of entertainment promotions and increased sales.

SCOPE: Thinking up ideas is not just the manager's job, nor is it the sole responsibility of the special events coordinator. Everyone has good ideas, and those ideas should be solicited and used whenever possible.

GENERAL: We charge dues as of today, that's a fact. And, the seemingly incessant question from our members seems to be "What value am I receiving for my membership dues?" Good promotions will take into account the need to foster goodwill and improved image. Special promotions to encourage member involvement and increase member goodwill and positive feelings should be employed at every possible opportunity.

GUIDANCE:

Step 1: Create a promotion calendar

- The major key to doing successful promotions is advance planning. Get in the habit of planning your promotional activities in 3-month blocks
 - Goal: All promotions will be completed A-Z, at least 30 days in advance of the actual promotion date
 - Fact: The more lead time you give yourself, the more likely the promotion is to be successful
 - Example:
 - 2nd Qtr 1995: Promotions completed Mar 1, 1995
 - 3rd Qtr 1995: Promotions completed by Jun 1, 1995
 - 4th Qtr 1995: Promotions completed by Sep 1, 1995

Step 2: Set priorities/Pick target dates

- Begin your sales building campaign by focusing on one specific day. Pick a week that you feel has the greatest sales potential (outside of Friday or Saturday, in most cases). As much as 80 percent of your promotional activities for the next quarters could be devoted to that day. The priority gives that one day most of your attention until the day occurs; then, you move on to the next *target* day.
- Promotions come in two primary categories: Single Day Promotions or Special Situational Promotions

- Single Day Promotions might include 1-day product promotions; Valentine's Day, St Patrick's Day, etc.
- Special Situational Promotions might include a weekly fashion show, monthly membership night, etc.
- What works best for promoting the club and its capabilities is a combination of the two

Step 3: Fill-In and complete the promotions calendar

- Let's say we run a "crud" tournament and pick Wednesday as our priority day. We decide that the promotion will run for 8 weeks with the semifinals on a Friday night and the finals on the following Friday night. Once properly planned, our calendar begins to provide a positive flow chart of our target events.

Step 4: Setting goals/building sales and member satisfaction

- Determine your average daily sales on your target day for the prior 4-8 weeks. This gives you an idea of where you are, sales wise, on that day. Now, chart a sales goal increase each week for that day.
- Example: Let's say you average \$500 sales on Wednesday before the crud tournament and, feel you could do \$750. The first week, your goal may be \$550; the second, \$575; the third, \$600, etc., until you reach your \$750 target. Get employees involved. Let them know what the goal is and allow them to see the score card often.

Step 5: Cost-out promotions

- I once worked for a manager who scheduled a weekly seafood buffet promo for \$7.95. After we costed out the promotion, the cost was \$8.35 per person to serve (*I guess we made it up in volume.*).
- Set a standard whereby each promotion you do must reach a certain goal. It doesn't always have to be a quantitative dollar goal, goodwill is also a very real reason to host a special function, especially if your image needs a slight refurbishing. Also, don't assume that money must be made the 1st week of a recurring promotion to be successful. Many promotions/events that started out for the first couple of weeks/months as losers, became the most popular and profitable offerings in a club. Be patient!

Step 6: Advertise effectively

- NEVER advertise until you're ready; and, NEVER spend more than your potential return.

- Your most cost-effective way to promote the club and its offerings is in-house. IF you have enough lead time AND you design a plan that involves EVERY member of your staff!!

Step 7: Use a promotion checklist

- Develop a checklist form to assist you and your staff in becoming detail oriented. The other benefit, when using a tool of this nature, is that you and your staff will begin to become more consistent. Each promotion will become more professional in nature.

Step 8: Decorations/Support graphics

- Decorate well and you give the impression that the promotion is worthwhile. Decorate poorly and you give the impression that you're flying by the seat of your pants. Set standards, allow ample time to decorate, manage the decorating process; have a plan that gives you the overall look you're seeking to accomplish your goal.
- Billboard certain special major events (like Halloween, Thanksgiving, Mother's Day) at least a week or two in advance of the event. Setting a mood or theme in your restaurant or bar or common club areas are ways to inform and motivate your present customers and remind your staff of the need to inform and persuade.
- Try to multiply the number of people that visit your club 7 days prior to a promotion. If you can sufficiently motivate 10-15 percent of those people come out for the promotion, you would be full and not have to advertise at all! In-house PR what a concept!

Step 9: Implement the promotion professionally

- Put your best foot forward with service, product, price/value, and entertainment. Be organized. Make sure that everyone knows what's going on and what's expected of them. Develop a game plan and come up with a schedule of events for bar staff, kitchen staff, night managers, DJs, etc. Maybe even schedule a rehearsal or dry-run. Remember, we're all in show business, - so make 'em remember ya!

Step 10: Follow-Up

- Take time to debrief. Look at what happened versus to what should've or could've been done. Don't look for people to make wrong look for solutions to make right. Document a historical report for your files, recapping your sales, costs, and profits. Send thank you letters/notes especially to the select few who may have really made the night a success (sponsors, volunteers, or just one or two distinctive personalities from the night's festivities).

SUMMARY:

Good Luck! And remember to have fun.